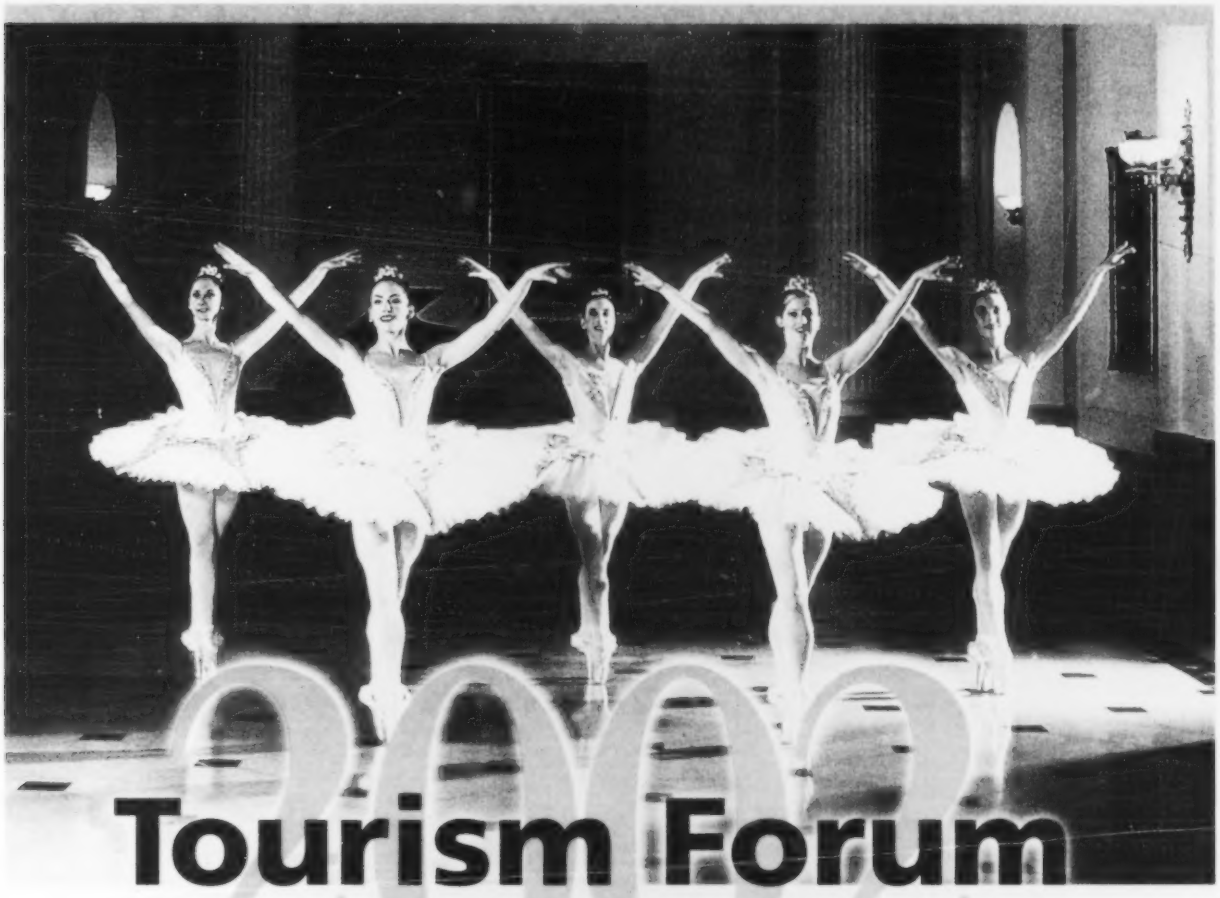

Tourism Forum 2002

Culture and Heritage. Share the Experience.

Summary of the Proceedings of the workshop held
November 27, 2002
Maison Du Bourgeois
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada

Discover our true nature

Manitoba

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Introduction

The results of the tourism industry forum held in February 2001 identified the improvement and expansion of Manitoba's cultural and heritage tourism products as a priority. 34% of participants expressed a desire to capitalize on development opportunities related to products such as festival and events, Aboriginal experiences and cultural/heritage based products.

How will the culture and heritage sector benefit from tourism?

- Tourism provides an opportunity to increase audience size and revenues.
- Tourism enhances the organizations profile and provides broader opportunities for community support and corporate sponsorship.
- Tourism enhances the awareness of Manitoba's culture and heritage product internationally.

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Tourism endorsed the need for a Culture and Heritage Tourism Strategy and will take the lead in packaging market-ready products.

Tourism Development opportunities include:

- Globally the tourism market is expected to increase with aging populations of highly educated, well-traveled baby boomers.
- Canadian tourism products have significant potential as Canada is seen as a safe place to travel.
- Manitoba has a diversity of high quality culture and heritage products.
- Manitoba culture and heritage attractions have experienced growth in visitation.
- Tour operators are seeking experiences to enhance what there is for tourists to see and do in Manitoba.
- The strength of Manitoba's culture and heritage product in the winter and spring seasons provides a unique opportunity to overcome the challenges of seasonality.

Working in partnership, the public and private sector can develop a strategy that motivates the industry to invest in research, development, marketing and training opportunities to realize economic growth and build the capacity of Manitoba communities.

As a first step in the process to develop a long-term strategy for the development of the Culture and Heritage tourism industry in the province, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism and the Canadian Tourism Commission hosted a one-day forum on November 27, 2002. The Forum brought together over 120 leaders in culture, heritage, tourism, labour and government to discuss future directions.

The forum was facilitated by Ms Janet Walker of Janet Walker Consultants and featured presentations and discussions intended to provide a link to the national culture and heritage tourism strategy, views from the perspective of another jurisdiction and the current state of Manitoba's culture and heritage tourism industry.

The day featured presentations from experts who spoke to the group about their hands-on experience with culture and heritage experiential tourism.

Presentations and Panelists included:

- Mr. Ernest Labrèque of the Canadian Tourism Commission
- Mr. Celes Davar of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Tourism and owner-operator of Earth Rhythms.
- Ms Lori Waldbrook of the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership
- Mr. Zaz Bajon, Manitoba Theatre Centre
- Ms Judy Murphy, of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Tourism and Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg
- Ms Marilyn Williams, Winnipeg Art Gallery
- Mr. Tom Kynman, Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site
- Mr. Philippe Mailhot, St. Boniface Museum
- Mr. John Lehr, University of Winnipeg

Workshop Proceedings

Opening Remarks

Mr. Hubert Mesman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism Division of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism officially opened the Forum. Mr. Mesman provided an overview of the tourism industry both in Canada and Manitoba and identified some opportunities that exist for the culture and heritage tourism sector.

Facts of interest:

- Tourism is worth more than $3.5 million a day to Manitoba's economy
- Last year, on average, more than 2,100 Americans visited Manitoba daily
- On average, every Manitoban benefits by $1,118.50 a year from tourist spending
- 1 in 10 Manitobans works in a tourism-related job
- Globally the tourism market is expected to increase with aging populations of highly educated, well-traveled baby boomers
- A culture and heritage tourist is more educated with a higher than average income

Panel discussion

Mr. John Lehr, University of Winnipeg, facilitated the session involving:

Mr. Zaz Bajon
Manitoba Theatre Centre

Ms Judy Murphy
Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg

Ms Marilyn Williams
Winnipeg Art Gallery

Mr. Tom Kynman
Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site

Mr. Philippe Mailhot
St. Boniface Museum

The panelists each represented a key component of the culture and heritage sector in the province. From the panel discussion, a list of values opportunities and challenges was created.

Mr. Ernest Labrèque
"Packaging the Potential"

Mr. Labrèque provided an update of the Canadian Tourism Commission's five-year strategy "Packaging the Potential". Examples of the activity that the Canadian Tourism Commission has undertaken to develop and market the culture and heritage products in Canada were provided.

In his presentation, Mr. Labrèque noted the increased interest of the Canadian Tourism Commission to support the development, research and marketing and sales of the Culture and heritage tourism products in Canada.

He highlighted strategies for development in each of the following areas:

- Communications and Linkages
- Product Development
- Marketing
- Education and Training
- Research

Mr. Celes Davar
"Experiential Tourism"

Mr. Davar provided first hand examples of "Selling the Experience". He challenged participants to think outside the box and create experiences that engage the visitor. Throughout the presentation Mr. Davar shared examples of programs for tourists that truly created a memory and an experience.

Mr. Davar referenced the attributes of selling the experience and experiential learning.

- Experience creates understanding; understanding creates support;
- Experience puts real tools in people's hands;
- Experience changes perception;
- Experience creates participants, not spectators;
- 'Experiential Tourism' generates new images of people enjoying experiences;
- 'Experiential Tourism' adds sustainability;
- 'Experiential Tourism' drives community development;
- 'Experiential Tourism' elevates authenticity;
- 'Experiential Tourism' sets new standards of quality;

Ms Lori Waldbrook
"The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership"

Ms Waldbrook provided an overview of successful culture/heritage packages that have been developed in Ontario. Ms Waldbrook outlined the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership structure, provided details on the process and identified the partners that have worked together to create packages.

Highlights of Ms Waldbrook's presentation:

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership is:

- An agency of the Government of Ontario;
- Responsible for marketing Ontario as a tourism destination;
- A Public/Private partnership with Ontario's tourism industry.

The role of the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership is to:

- Create quality buyable experiences;
- Develop unique Ontario products to sell to consumers through alliances.

The Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership currently has 15 culture and heritage alliances. The alliances represent packages created in the Performing and Visual Arts, Museums/cultural centres/historic sites and Festival and Events. Ms Waldbrook provided details on many of the alliances and outlined their successes and challenges.

Roundtable Discussions

During roundtable discussions in the afternoon, the participants were able to articulate the opportunities and challenges for the sector and identify requirements to enhance the market readiness of their products.

Ideas generated through the roundtable discussions included:

Imagine!

A group of visitors from Kansas gather behind the scenes as cast and crew prepares for a Canadian tour of a made-in-Manitoba production. The company's founder or a local historian offers historical insight to the company's development and the playwright or choreographer takes 20 minutes to teach the group a few steps from the current production. A tour of the facility follows…

Did you know?

Visitors to the Morden Corn and Apple Festival can create their own woodcarving to gain an appreciation for the skill involved in preparing and sculpting. They usually purchase one of the instructor's carvings as a souvenir.

How will WE make the Connections...

We could link Urban and Rural experience like the WAG's Inuit art collection with northern tours or combine evenings of theatre, ballet or symphony with dinner at a prominent Winnipeg ethnic restaurant. The Manitoba Museum could launch a "Northern Lights" Exhibit with spiritual interpretation by an Aboriginal elder. We might even consider combining a culture and heritage product with a soft adventure like hiking in Duck Mountains, a horse and buggy ride, a visit to Hutterite colony and a visit to a local church.

Let's "ING" it!

Quilting, smithing, baking are all experiences that might delight visitors to the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. What are the other experiences Manitoba might offer to get visitors doING?

Closing Remarks

Deputy Minister of Manitoba Culture Heritage and Tourism Sandra Hardy provided closing remarks. She encouraged participants to continue their dialogue in developing a long-term strategy.

What we discovered

- A major motivator of tourism is learning what is special about a place's culture and heritage. It involves a quality visitor encounter with a cultural or historic experience that is authentic and not created solely for the purpose of attracting tourists.
- Culture and Heritage Tourism must be sustainable and must ensure that the quality and integrity of the resource or 'experience' is conserved. The partnership between the culture/heritage and tourism sectors must be a revenue-generator for both sectors.
- Manitoba's Cultural and Heritage Tourism proponents represent activities including:
  - Performing Arts (Theatre, Dance and Music)
  - Visual Arts and Crafts
  - Museums and Cultural Centres
  - Historic Sites, Villages and Interpretative Centres
  - Festivals and Events

Aboriginal Tourism, Language Learning Tourism and Culinary Tourism are linked to cultural and heritage tourism and warrant special mention.

Opportunities

Culture and heritage tourism offers Manitoba participants an opportunity to:

- increase audience size and revenues
- create new partnerships
- expand the season
- share information
- create greater awareness of the sector

Challenges

The participants identified the following challenges to realizing growth in the sector:

- limited awareness of the product. Manitoba has been promoted primarily as a natural and recreational destination;
- limited awareness of culture and heritage opportunities;
- linkages between levels of government and among sector proponents are in the very early stages of development;
- sector is focussed on sustainability, development and profitability, not tourism;
- limited resources for development and marketing;
- human resource challenges exist - volunteers are over-taxed and there is limited staff to pursue new ventures;
- day-to-day operational issues take precedent over new initiatives;
- new initiatives may hinder the delivery of core offerings;
- need to balance the needs of the growing local audiences and tourists;
- lack of knowledge between the cultural/ heritage tourism sectors about the potential;
- lack of education and training tailored to the cultural and heritage tourism sector;
- government investment in upgrading and maintaining attractions has been restrained by sector cutbacks.

Values

The participants were easily able to identify shared ideas and common values including:

- authentic experiences
- standards and core activity that will not be comprised
- integrity
- the guiding philosophy of preservation and protection of the resource
- protection and nurturing of local interests as well as creating new initiatives
- quality experiences for their clients
- active partnerships including partnerships with Aboriginal organizations
- research based and market-driven development decisions
- the efforts of volunteers

Product Development

- Participants agreed that dedicated 'product facilitators', similar to those utilized by the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, are needed to put 'experiences' together. It was suggested that initially Manitoba culture and heritage tourism experiences might be created by borrowing ideas from the marketing materials and packages offered by similar destinations and adapting the concepts for use in Manitoba.
- The following concepts were identified as possible future alliances. Some feature experiential tourism components while others offer ideas for potential partnership building or sponsor development.

NORTHERN LIGHTS TOUR offers another possible approach to winter tourism.

ABORIGINAL TOURS originating from Thunderbird House, an urban, authentic and spiritual place in the heart of Winnipeg might serve as a focus for hands-on, experiential Aboriginal cultural camps and lead to partnerships with similar rural experiences.

CANADIAN FUR TRADE creating partnerships with Festival du Voyageur, Lower Fort Garry, the Manitoba Museum and tour operators are starting points for a potential tour focussed on the Fur Trade.

AGRI-TOURISM to capitalize on our agriculture, develop partnerships around the grain industry to create and market farm tours with an industry, rather than tourism focus.

MIXING NATURE WITH CULTURE/ HERITAGE partnering Morty and MTS, Bison Farms, Fort Whyte Centre, Manitoba's legislature, the Polo Bear, northern Manitoba, Churchill and Manitoba's Aboriginal community could create a distinctive nature and culture/heritage alliance.

THE CHRISTMAS CAPITAL OF CANADA special events such as a Victorian Christmas at different attractions could be packaged with Christmas shopping excursions, an evening of Nutcracker with the RWB and a visit to the Morden's Chocolate factory.

- To facilitate networking and communication, participants recommended a product inventory be developed and that a culture and heritage database be established.

Marketing

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Tourism will take the lead in "branding" Manitoba tourism. Participants in the Culture and Heritage Tourism Forum heartily endorsed the need for a Manitoba Brand having identified this, as the single most important marketing initiative required for success in promoting experiential tourism. Participants also recommended:

- That pilot or experimental projects be initiated to build on the momentum, develop relationships among partners and create a template for future ventures.
- That potential media contacts be identified to generate awareness of the culture and heritage tourism product and that illustrated guides and educational and interactive material be created to promote the product.
- That market expansion be undertaken over the mid to long-term (five years)

Communication and Linkages

It is recognized that regular, clear and open communication is necessary for success in launching an experiential tourism initiative among participants who, to date, have functioned with little knowledge of each other's opportunities and challenges. Communication among organizations and between organizations and government departments is considered important. Enhanced communications will facilitate the identification of partnerships, linkages and alliances. The participants identified the following communications opportunities:

- Host a forum to be called "Meet-Mates" for the culture and heritage and tourism sectors to meet face to face to discuss the possible creation of partnerships in the future for product development and marketing activity.

- Enhance communication through the use of technological support such as the new Tourism Industry Web-site and the 'product inventory' database.
- Provide opportunities for Manitobans to become tourism ambassadors to instill pride in our heritage and culture and build awareness of the culture and heritage sector. The public education/school system could be used as a possible training ground for Manitoba's ambassadors.

Education and Training

Participants agreed that culture and heritage tourism initiatives need to be supported with a well-developed quality assurance program and education and training opportunities.

The following specific suggestions were among those raised by workshop participants:

- Industry standards should be established, implemented, monitored and adopted by the industry.
- There is a need for credit courses, university education and mentorship opportunities specifically connected to arts and heritage organizations.
- To promote better understanding, it was suggested that Tourism Awareness training be made available to those in the Culture and Heritage Sector and that Culture and Heritage training be made available for those in the Tourism sector.
- Specific training is required in product facilitation, partnership linkages, marketing and planning.

Resources

The need for organizations to achieve return-on-investment was mentioned frequently with respect to the development of new or experimental packaging initiatives. The participants agreed that dedicated "product facilitators", similar to those utilized by the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership, are needed to put 'experiences' together. The tourism industry should provide this in order to avoid burning out the staff and volunteer base.

Participants expressed a clear desire that innovative funding programs be created and requested that programs involving matching funds and one-time grants be avoided. The preference was for a funding commitment to develop the sector over the next 3-5 years.

The participants determined that financial support for long-term planning and for demonstration projects and partnerships would help reduce the risk associated with new ventures.

Other suggestions for resources included:

- resources for staff training and for mentors with specific skills;
- a Development Fund that would emphasize return on investment and that would provide operating support;
- development of a 10-year plan to address funding shortfalls.

Next Steps

Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism will work in consultation with the Ministerial Advisory Council on Tourism to develop the Culture and Heritage Tourism Strategy.

The Department will facilitate the development of a research based, market driven strategy that respects the values of the culture and heritage sector. To assess results, measurable objectives will be a critical component of the strategy.

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